



# CIVILIAN PERSONNEL SECTION FACTSHEET

Current as of Mar 19

## DEATH IN SERVICE SURVIVOR BENEFITS

*Applicable to U.S. appropriated fund civilian employees and their dependents*

**PURPOSE:** There are a number of different death benefits available to survivors of an employee who dies in service. The Benefits and Entitlements Service Team (BEST) at the Air Force Personnel Center are available to assist survivors in completing their claims. The following is a list of benefits that may be payable to survivors.

**UNPAID COMPENSATION:** This includes the unpaid hours worked, and the unused hours of annual leave accrued as of the date of death. This amount is distributed in a lump sum payment to the employee's beneficiary or by order of precedence established by Federal statute.

**HEALTH INSURANCE:** If the employee was enrolled in self and family health coverage at the time of death and there is a survivor annuity payable to a spouse and/or children, the survivor may continue health insurance coverage. Premiums will be deducted from the survivor annuity. If the employee was enrolled in self and family health coverage at the date of death, but a survivor annuity is not payable, the health insurance enrollment terminates with the survivors having the right to convert to a private policy within 30 days. Exception: If covered under the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) and the deceased Federal employee has at least 18 months of civilian service, the survivor may keep the health benefits coverage, but will be required to make direct premium payments to the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). If the employee was enrolled in self-only coverage at the date of death, the enrollment terminates at death with no right to enroll or convert for the survivors

**LIFE INSURANCE:** Life insurance benefits payable will be paid in the order of precedence established by Federal statute, unless the employee has a valid SF 2823 (Designation of Beneficiary) on file. However, a valid court order filed with the employing agency after October 1998 and before the employee's death will take precedence over a written designation of beneficiary.

**THRIFT SAVINGS PLAN:** All money in the employee's TSP account is payable in the order of precedence established by Federal statute, unless the employee has a valid TSP-3 (Designation of Beneficiary), on file.

**SURVIVOR ANNUITY:** The surviving spouse and/or children may be eligible for a survivor annuity from the deceased employee's retirement system either, Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) or FERS. If the spouse and/or children are not eligible for a survivor annuity or there is no surviving spouse or children, the retirement contributions will be paid to the employee's designated beneficiary or, in the absence of a designated beneficiary, in the order of precedence established by Federal statute.

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**DEATH GRATUITY PAYMENT:** If an employee's death results from an injury sustained in the performance of duty, the United States shall pay a monthly compensation equal to a percentage of the monthly pay of the deceased employee in accordance with the schedule listed under (5 U.S.C. 8133 - Compensation in case of death). Also, the personal representative of the deceased or otherwise, shall be paid for funeral and burial expenses not to exceed \$800 (5 U.S.C. 8134(a) – Funeral expenses; transportation of body), in the discretion of the Secretary of Labor.

**WHO WILL ASSIST ME IN FILING MY CLAIM?** BEST will provide death advisory services, including assistance with completing claim forms. You may reach BEST by calling toll-free 1-800-525-0102; press 2 for Air Force-serviced civilian employee, then press 2 again for BEST benefits and entitlements, and follow the prompts. Benefits Counselors are available Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Central Time.

**I AM THE SURVIVOR, WHAT DO I HAVE TO DO FOR THESE APPLICABLE BENEFITS?** If you are the survivor of an employee who has died, you should notify the employee's supervisor who will in turn contact the Civilian Personnel Section (CPS). The supervisor and CPS will need to know the name and phone number of the next-of-kin (NOK). The CPS will provide this information to BEST, and the NOK will receive contact information of a BEST representative. BEST will counsel the survivor regarding entitlements and provide claim forms. BEST will also assist the survivor in completing the claims forms (with accompanying documentation, e.g., certified death certificate, marriage certificate, birth certificate, where applicable) and directing them to the appropriate claim processing offices. The claim for unpaid compensation and accompanying documentation will be returned to BEST. The Benefits Counselor will provide the appropriate names and address of claim processing offices to the survivor.

BEST Fax Number: DSN 312-665-2936 or commercial (210) 565-2936.

BEST Mailing Address:       HQ AFPC/DPIRB  
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Additional guidance on this topic is available from your Employee Relations Specialist. Contact information found in the footer below.